

2. 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 4, and 12-16 stand rejected as allegedly anticipated by Mooney. "A claim is anticipated if and only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference." MPEP 2131. The Office Action alleges that Mooney describes each and every element as set forth in claims 1, 4, and 12-16. Applicants respectfully traverse.

Applicants have amended claim 1 to describe that the tripod includes "a shoe positioned between said at least one cam locking unit and a corresponding one of said leg assemblies, wherein said shoe is adapted to reduce an amount of stress applied to said corresponding leg assembly by said cam locking unit." See, e.g., Appl'n, Page 8, Lines 7-12; and **Fig. 2**. For example, shoe 38 may be positioned between cam 46 and tube 36, such that shoe 38 reduces any stress which cam 46 would apply to tube 36 if cam 46 directly contacted tube 36.

In contrast, Mooney describes a locking arrangement for a tripod comprising a cam 58. Cam 58 is urged in a engaged position by a spring 64. Moreover, when cam 58 is in the engaged position, a leg member 20 and a leg member 22 "may be easily extended relative to each other by simply hand pulling. When so extended, they are locked against reverse movement, but not further extension." Mooney, Column 3, Lines 60-65. Specifically, when leg member 20 moves in a first direction B, i.e., when leg member 20 extends, cam 58 may move/rotate in direction which is opposite a direction of a biasing force applied by spring 64. As such, leg member 20 may be extended relative to leg member 22. Moreover, when leg member 20 moves in a second direction C, i.e., when leg member 20 retracts, cam 58 may move/rotate in direction which is the same as the biasing force applied by spring 64. Specifically, cam 58 impinges on a surface 34 which causes leg member 20 to bear against leg member 22. Consequently, leg member 20 and leg member 22 do not move relative to each other. In order to retract leg member 20, pressure is applied to a handle 66, which moves cam 58 to a disengaged position. See, e.g., Mooney, Column 3, Lines 13-39.

Nevertheless, a hub portion 68 of cam 58 directly contacts leg member 20. See, e.g., Mooney, **Fig. 4**. Thus, Mooney fails at least to describe that the tripod includes "a shoe positioned between said at least one cam locking unit and a corresponding one of said leg assemblies, wherein said shoe is adapted to reduce an amount of stress applied to said corresponding leg assembly by said cam locking unit," as described in amended claim 1. (Emphasis added.)

Applicants' original claim 13 describes that the tripod may include a shoe, and the Office Action appears to assert that a support member 44 described in Mooney corresponds to Applicants' shoe. Nevertheless, support member 44 is positioned below cam 58, and is adapted to support cam 58. (Emphasis added.) As such, support member 44 is not adapted to reduce an amount of stress applied to leg member 20 by cam 58, e.g., hub portion 68 of cam 58 directly contacts leg member 20. Therefore Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the anticipation rejection of claim 1. Claims 4 and 12-16 depend from amended claim 1. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner also withdraw the anticipation rejection of claims 4 and 12-16.

3. 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 2 and 11 stand rejected as allegedly rendered obvious by Mooney in view of Johnson, and claim 5 stands rejected as allegedly rendered obvious by Mooney in view of Hartman. As set forth in detail above, Applicants maintain that Mooney at least fails to disclose or suggest that the tripod includes "a shoe positioned between said at least one cam locking unit and a corresponding one of said leg assemblies, wherein said shoe is adapted to reduce an amount of stress applied to said corresponding leg assembly by said cam locking unit," as described in amended claim 1. Moreover, the Office Action does not allege that Hartman, Johnson, or any other reference discloses or suggests these missing limitations. Claims 2, 5, and 11 depend from amended claim 1. "If an independent claim is non-obvious under 35 U.S.C. 103, then any claim depending therefrom is nonobvious." MPEP 2143.03 (citations omitted). Therefore, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the various obviousness rejection of claim 2, 5, and 11.

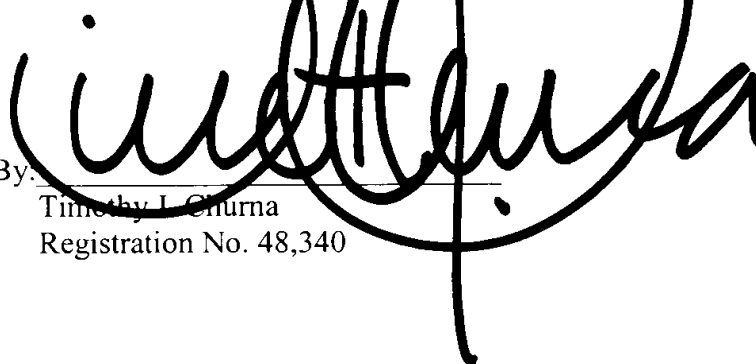
CONCLUSION

Applicants respectfully submit that this application, as amended, is in condition for allowance, and such disposition is earnestly solicited. If the Examiner believes that an interview with Applicants' representatives, either in person or by telephone, would expedite the

prosecution of this application, we would welcome such an opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

BAKER BOTTS L.L.P.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy J. Churna', is written over the printed name and registration number. The signature is enclosed within a large, hand-drawn circle.

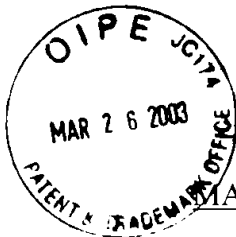
By: _____
Timothy J. Churna
Registration No. 48,340

Dated: March 26, 2003

Baker Botts L.L.P.
The Warner; Suite 1300
1299 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20004-2400
Tel: (202) 639-7700
Fax: (202) 639-7890

JBA/TJC/dh

Enclosure



MARKED-UP COPY OF AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS
IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel original claim 13, without prejudice.

Please amend original claim 1, as follows:

1. (twice amended) A fast-deployable light weight tripod, comprising
 - a) a center support for supporting a load, provided with three peripheral hinge members;
 - b) at least three multi-stage telescoping leg assemblies each attached to one of said hinge members, each leg assembly comprising at least two compression-resistant members interconnected by a telescopic joint;
 - c) at least one cam locking unit associated with each telescopic joint, each locking unit having a first engaged position which allows extension of said leg assembly but prevents relative axial movement which would shorten the length of said leg assembly, and a second disengaged position wherein said assemblies are free to move in either axial direction, each locking unit being urged towards its engaged position for automatic locking of said tripod in its deployed position with said cam locking being effected by pressure on said cam unit from its associated extended leg; [and further comprising]
 - d) a hand accessible release element for each leg assembly for independently releasing said at least one cam locking unit associated therewith, thereby enabling the shortening of the length of said assembly; and
 - e) a shoe positioned between said at least one cam locking unit and a corresponding one of said leg assemblies, wherein said shoe is adapted to reduce an amount of stress applied to said corresponding leg assembly by said cam locking unit.